

## *Keara Holland*



I am proud to say that I have been riding Morgan horses for over half of my 15 years. My relationship with horseback riding began when I was six years old at the local YMCA summer camp. The YMCA teamed up with Miller Equestrian Services and that was the beginning of my almost 10-year equestrian career with Ann Miller. It began with a couple of weeks of camp each summer and then, after begging my mom, I started taking lessons every Saturday. I learned to ride on Morgan lesson horses and rode in local horse shows in Academy classes. After more begging, I began to lease a horse all summer, so I could be at the barn as much as possible and ride five days a week. Over the years my love for horseback riding has continued to grow into my passion and I can't wait to get to the barn as much as possible. When I was 13, I moved up from Academy, and have never looked back. I love the Morgan breed and my dream has always been to ride Saddle Seat Equitation at MGN. I attended

MGN the last couple of years as well as constantly watch past show videos. I can tell you who won every Saddle Seat Equitation class, what horse they were riding and even the color of the riders' equitation suit. Everyone at Miller knows that my dream has always been to ride Saddle Seat Equitation at MGN. And this year, I was blessed with an amazing opportunity from a wonderful lady at the barn. Ann Blankenship offered to split her horse with me, so I am going to ride Clayhill Affirmative GCH "Mouse", in a few classes. This is my dream come true and my mom and I both cried tears of joy when Ann Miller told us about this amazingly heartfelt gift. I live with my parents, Steve and Julee, in San Diego, California. My brother just moved out to go to college, so it is pretty quiet around our house. I am currently a sophomore at La Costa Canyon (LCC) High School and when I am not riding, I enjoy playing on our high school softball team, studying, reading and hanging out with friends. In addition to showing this summer, I kept myself busy with several equestrian related activities. I helped Ann and the Miller team out with summer camp. I also applied and received the USEF Interscholastic Athlete Letter for the past two years as well as have successfully completed the Bulrush, Woodbury and will have the Sherman Merit Program completed by the end of this month. It has been a busy summer! The areas that set me apart from my competitors are my commitment, competitor research and my passion. I ride 4-5 days a week, even though the barn is 40 minutes away from my house. I forgo a lot of fun high school activities as my focus is on riding and improving! I research every rider I will compete against and how they ride. I also spend a lot of time watching past winners - what did they do well? I study their leg position, hands, how they work the arena, etc. and practice it daily so that when I enter the show ring, it is just like any other day at the barn. To say I am passionate about this sport, is an understatement. I would love to be selected as the Morgan Youth of the Year because the Morgan breed has played such an important role in my life. The relationships I have made, the life lessons I have learned have helped shape me into the person I am today. I have grown a lot both personally and as an equestrian. I have more confidence and am able to take on whatever comes my way. I would be grateful to represent the breed as the AMHA Youth of The Year.